

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 099875 TOSEC 040134
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY EA:WHGLEYSTEEN

APPROVED BY EA:RHOLBROOKE

P:DNEWSOM

H:DBENNET

PM:JKAHAN

EA/K:RGRICH

S/S:FWISNER

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P 190102Z APR 78 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 099875 TOSEC 040134

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STADIS//////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, KS

SUBJECT: IMPENDING DECISION ON KOREAN GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWALS

1. YOU INDICATED AFTER YOUR MEETING WITH BROWN AND BRZEZINSKI LAST WEEK ON KOREAN TROOP WITHDRAWALS THAT YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO SEND A PERSONAL MESSAGE REINFORCING THE POSITION YOU HAVE INSTRUCTED WARREN CHRISTOPHER AND DICK HOLBROOKE TO TAKE WHEN BRZEZINSKI CONVENES THE MEETING TO FORMULATE FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PRESIDENT.

THIS MEETING IS NOW SCHEDULE FOR 2:00 PM WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19 (8:00 PM LONDON TIME). ZABLOCKI IS HOLDING UP THE HIRC MARKUP PENDING WORD ON ANY POSSIBLE CHANGE IN

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THE ADMINISTRATION POSITION; BUT HE WILL NOT DELAY PAST THURSDAY. ACCORDINGLY, WOULD YOU AUTHORIZE WARREN CHRISTOPHER, IN ADDITION TO REPRESENTING THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S POSITION AS PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED, TO USE THE FOLLOWING LANGUAGE AS NECESSARY AS A REPRESENTATION ON YOUR OWN PERSONAL VIEW. (FYI: WE HAVE TENTATIVE INDICATIONS FROM THE NSC THAT, SINCE YOUR MEETING WITH

ZBIG, HE HAS MOVED IN THE DIRECTION OF YOUR POSITION. END
FYI.)

2. BEGIN QUOTE:

"I STRONGLY SUPPORT DEFERRING WITHDRAWAL OF THE FIRST COMBAT BRIGADE FOR 6-12 MONTHS. AS I TOLD HAROLD BROWN AND ZBIG JUST BEFORE LEAVING WASHINGTON, I HAVE BEEN FORCED TO THIS CONCLUSION BY THE WAY THE ISSUE HAS EVOLVED IN CONGRESS. IF WE PROCEED WITH THE ORIGINAL WITHDRAWAL SCHEDULE WITHOUT PRIOR CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF THE WEAPONS TRANSFER AUTHORIZATION, I AM CONVINCED WE WILL CONVEY A DANGEROUS SIGNAL TO THE NORTH KOREANS AND SERIOUSLY UNDERMINE THE ADMINISTRATION'S CREDIBILITY IN KOREA, JAPAN AND MOST OF EAST ASIA. A 6-12 MONTHS' DELAY NEED NOT COMPROMISE OUR BASIC POSITION OR TIME FRAME. MOREOVER, I THINK OUR WILLINGNESS TO LIFT THE KOREAN BURDEN OFF THE BACK OF CONGRESS THIS YEAR WILL STRIKE MOST CONGRESSMEN AS SENSIBLE AND CONSTRUCTIVE. SPECIFICALLY, I THINK WE SHOULD GO TO THE CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP AND TELL THEM THAT WE ARE PREPARED IF THEY WISH AND BELIEVE NECESSARY TO POSTPONE THE FIRST COMBAT BRIGADE'S WITHDRAWAL FOR ABOUT SIX MONTHS SO THAT THE CONGRESS CAN DEFER ACTION ON THE TRANSFER AUTHORIZATION ISSUE THIS YEAR. CONCEIVABLY, THE LEADERSHIP WILL COME BACK WITH A COMPROMISE PROPOSAL. IF THEY DO, WE CAN

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CONSIDER IT ON ITS MERITS. BUT THE KEY THING NOW IS TO RELIEVE THE PRESSURE IN A WAY WHICH PRESERVES OUR ABILITY TO COMPLETE THE GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWALS AS EARLIER CONTEMPLATED, MAINTAINS OUR DEFENSE POSTURE, AND EASES THE TREMENDOUS STRAINS WHICH KOREA HAS CAUSED THIS CONGRESS. OF COURSE, THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOME 3,000 SUPPORT TROOPS AND THE HONEST JOHN BATTALION SHOULD PROCEED AS EVIDENCE OF OUR COMMITMENT TO THE FUNDAMENTAL POLICY."

END QUOTE. CHRISTOPHER

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NNN

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